

# What's Going On?

## Joint Health Plan Talks Underway

On May 19, officials from the Cities of Bryan and College Station and Brazos County met to discuss a joint health plan initiative. Preston Pomykal, a consultant with McGriff, Seibels, and Williams had been hired by the entities to study the feasibility of a joint health plan. Mr. Pomykal presented his preliminary findings to the group. Some highlights of the report were:

- Overall administration fees could be lowered by pooling together;
- Network discounts were the "key" to cost savings;
- Greater savings could be achieved by pooling the plans;
- There may be some potential savings to stop loss costs by pooling together;
- The analysis indicates a potential savings of \$800,000 for all 3 entities, which would help to offset cost increase for the next plan year; and
- The final recommendation was to proceed with a formal bid or request for proposal (RFP) to collectively purchase group health insurance.

The Commissioner's Court and Bryan City Council will discuss and vote on whether to move forward with the recommendation at their next meeting. The College Station City Council voted and agreed to move forward with the formal process to collectively purchase health insurance. Once all entities have officially approved the plan, the Staff and our consultant will begin to prepare the specifications and necessary agreements to begin the formal process of soliciting information from the health insurance markets.

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## Southside Traffic Calming Plan Approved

The City Council recently approved a traffic calming program for the Southside area of College Station. The approved plan includes the area just north of Dexter to just south of Fairview (east to west— from George Bush Drive to Holleman.).

The final plan was the result of an extensive effort to include stakeholders in the Southside Area to have input into what traffic calming measures would be enacted in the area. This



Curb extension to be use in the Southside Area.



Lane narrowing median to be used in the Southside Areas.

process include a series of 9 meetings in which residents developed a traffic calming plan. Once the plan was developed, ballots were mailed to area property owner to allow them to vote for or against the plan. The result of this voting

process was a 68% yes vote, approving the traffic calming plan. On May 22nd, the City Council unanimously approved the plan. The estimate cost of these traffic calming measures approximately \$73,000 and is slated for Fall 2003 construction.

## Monthly Sales Tax Receipts

The City collected **\$1,211,642.91** for the month of April, **2.07%** below the same month last year. The April receipts are for sales that occurred in March. Sales tax collections for FY 03 YTD are **\$8,312,069.18** or **2.35%** above FY 02 collections.

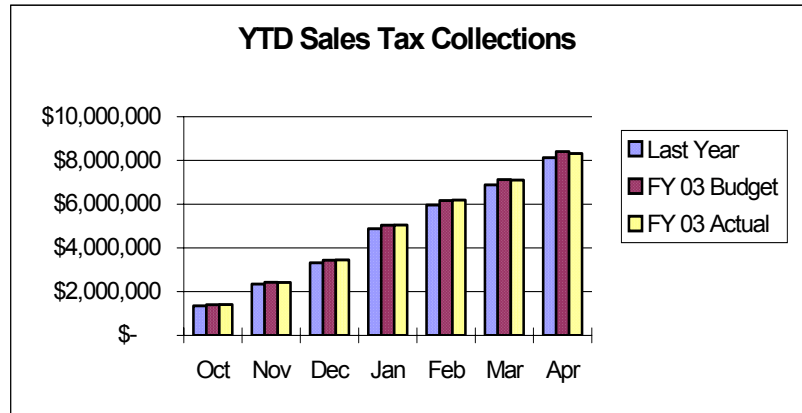
Sales tax receipts are lower than the same month last year. Sales tax receipts have increased by 3.5% when comparing the last 12 months to the previous 12 months. This is positive given the overall statewide decline in sales tax revenues. Sales tax projections for next year have been lowered to 2% growth due to the uncertainty in the local economy. This uncertainty is

primarily due to the state budget crisis and the impact this may have on the level of funding for higher education in the next 2 years.

Over the last 8 years sales tax growth has averaged 6% per year. In FY 03 sales tax is projected to grow by 3%. Hence, the current

growth rate is in line with growth projections. These projections will be closely reviewed given the statewide decline in sales tax revenues.

We are continuing to monitor national, state, and local economic trends to determine what impact those trends may have on sales tax



## Housing Permit Update

Year-to-date Development Services has \$77,188,188 worth of construction as compared to \$54,498,386 at this point last year.

Of the total permitted this year, \$18,373,848 was commercial construction. The City had \$10,488,533 for commercial construction at this point last year.

April saw 98 single-family homes permitted along with a record 46 duplexes (92 dwelling units).

Roughly \$48,000 in additional permit revenue has been generated compared to the first six months of 2002.

## City Employee Receives License

Recently, one of the Building Inspectors in the Development Service, Christopher Haver, took and passed the State of Texas exam to become a licensed plumbing inspector. A plumbing inspector license is required by the State before an inspector can perform plumbing inspections. Christopher passed the exam on the first attempt. This is a significant accomplishment since the pass rate for this exam has historically been low. This accomplishment is indicative of the caliber of employee city-wide.

## Local Government and Local Businesses Working Together

The Cities of College Station, Bryan, and Brazos County are conducting vendor training co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and Small Business Development Center. The City Council is cordially invited to attend this event. Here are some of the details:

What: "Local Businesses, Local Government - Working Together"

When: Monday, June 23, 2003 beginning at

11:00

Purpose: The purchasing divisions from each agency will be presenting a "How to Do Business" with us and will show vendors how to register (on-line) for all three agencies with one application. This will begin the process of working toward the ultimate goal of implementing electronic bidding.

Each entity involved will be advertising

this event extensively through the various media outlets and the Chamber of Commerce. On an additional note, the Small Business Development Council has helped tremendously with coordinating the location, advertising, registrations, etc. The work of this organization is greatly appreciated by all involved.

## Hotel/Motel Tax

Hotel/Motel occupancy tax revenues for FY 2003 are \$1,173,982 which is approximately 9.9% above the same period last year. That is a healthy growth on a year to year basis.

Our average growth over the past 5 years has been approximately 6.4% annually with a high of 12.5% from FY 98 to FY 99 and a low of 2.5% from FY 00 to FY 01.

Although absolute trends are difficult to identify, either January or February tends to be the month the City receives the lowest revenues. The month where the City receives the most revenues seems to be

much less predictable. Over the last 5 years the most monthly Hotel/Motel tax revenues received by the City has occurred in November, December, May, and July. Since this fiscal year is not yet over, so far it was October.

City staff projection for Hotel/Motel tax revenue indicates that will exceed the budget estimate of \$2,015,000 for the fiscal year, which is approximately 4.5% above the FY 02 year end actual of \$1,926,009. The average annual increase over the last 5 fiscal years has been approximately 4.5%. On average, the first 7 months of the fiscal year provides approximately

57.4% of annual revenues with a high of 68.4% and a low of approximately 54.2%. Assuming that this year is average, we could expect revenues of \$2,044,000 (approximately 1.4% above the budget estimate).

Based on the above and estimating a 4.5% increase in Hotel/Motel tax revenues next year, we can expect total H/M Tax revs to be approximately \$2,136,000.

## City Water Receives Superior Rating

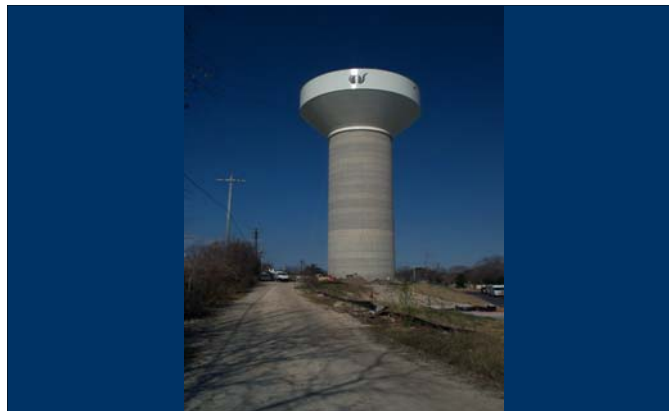
Americans drink more than 1 billion glasses of tap water per day, and finding information on the safety of this water is easier than consumers may think. One way for consumers to determine if their drinking water is safe is by reading their annual Drinking Water Quality Report. Annual Drinking Water Quality Reports, also called Consumer Confidence Reports, are required of all public water suppliers and must be issued by July 1 of each year.

College Station Utilities mailed its Drinking Water Quality Report for 2002 to all College Station water customers, and posted it online at <http://pud.ci.college-station.tx.us/Wqualitypage.htm>, earlier this month. Additional copies of the report are available at the Utility Service Center

and Utility Customer Service buildings, and at City Hall.

The report contains information about the source of College Station's water, what substances were detected in the water in 2002 and the possible sources of those substances, and how College Station's

water compares to Federal and State standards. In addition, the report highlights activities undertaken by College Station Utilities in 2002 to continue to provide safe, reliable water service. Once again, College Station's water had SUPERIOR performance for 2002, complying with ALL State and Federal standards.

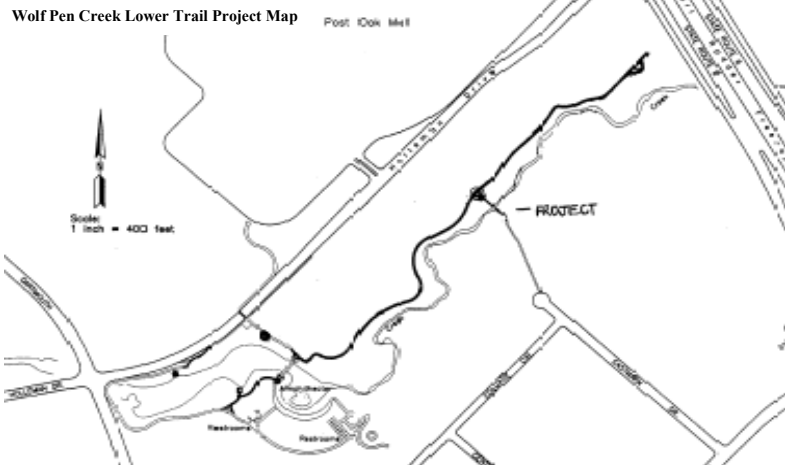


## Wolf Pen Creek Trail Dedication

The Wolf Pen Creek Trails (lower trail) and Pedestrian Bridges are slated for a dedication ceremony on Saturday, June 7th at 9:00 am.

This project was been underway for quite some, with the final design contract being approved by the City Council in July of 2001. The construction contract was awarded to G Creek Incorporated in May of 2002.

This trail project includes the construction of trails, pedestrian bridge, kiosk, overlook structures, as well as electrical



and telephone components. This portion of the trail system will extend from Dartmouth to State Highway 6. Another

section of trails is currently under design and will extend the trail system from Dartmouth to Texas Avenue.

## George Bush Drive Widening; Construction Is Underway

At the March 23, 2003 City Council Meeting, the Council approved a construction contract with Young Contractors. This construction is to begin widening George Bush Drive East from Texas Avenue to Dominik. This section of roadway will be upgraded to meet the City's standard for a minor arterial. The widening project will convert this section of George Bush to 4-lanes with a median, bike lanes, and sidewalks.

Notice to proceed on the construction for this project was issued on May 12, 2003 and actual construction is underway.



Currently, the projected cost of this project is \$2,312,000.

Although the design contract for the project was approved in May of 2000, this project



has been held-up with land acquisition, which took longer and cost more than originally anticipated. Much of the funding for this widening was approved by voters in the 1998 Bond Election.

## Veterans' Park Put to Good Use

College Station Independent School District (CSISD) has wasted no time in making arrangements to utilize one of the City newest assets. CSISD has requested the use of Veterans Park & Athletic Complex for their invi-

tational cross country meet on Thursday, October 16th and the 13-5A District cross country meet on Thursday, October 23rd, 2003. The City has agreed to reserve the park for those dates from 8am - 5pm.

In the past, CSISD has used Central Park to host this invitational meet. However, superior parking facilities and more overall space available at Veterans' Park make it a better suited for the invitational than Central Park.



## Summer Food Program to Serve Meals at the Lincoln Center

Because hunger does not take a vacation, the Bryan Independent School District (ISD) Child Nutrition Services provides free meals to area children in need.

Bryan ISD Child Nutrition Services is serving free meals to Bryan/College Station children at 13 sites this summer. Meals are served to any child between the ages of 1-18. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that low-income children continue to grow and learn during the summer. These meals provide essential nutrients for active, growing children.

The Summer Food Service Program is a USDA program administered by the Texas Department of Human Services that provides funds for non-profits, schools, and local governments to

serve nutritious meals free to low-income children ages 1-18 during the summer months. Summer programs are located at approved sites that are either in low-income areas or serve a group of children most of whom are low-income.

To participate in the free meals program all kids have to do is show up at a feeding site.

The College Station Lincoln Center is the only approved Summer Food Service Program site in College Station. Both breakfast and lunch will be served at the Lincoln Center from June 5– July 31.

Anyone interested in the program can contact Bryan ISD Child Nutrition Services at 361-5239 for more information.



## Parks Department Athletic Program Receives High Marks

The youth basketball program, which runs from December to March, had 90 teams and 700 participants this year. The league consisted of an eight-game, round robin, with several scheduled practices for each team. Participants register individually and are placed on teams by the College Station Parks and Recreation Department. The program increased this year by 61 kids and six teams over last year

(2002). According to Parks Department staff, this was a great year for youth basketball! A survey, distributed at the end of the season, came back with a 99% satisfactory rating.

Much of the success of this past season can be attributed to the College Station Independent School District. CSISD for the use of the gymnasiums (CSISD). The City has a joint use agreement with CSISD which seems to

work for both parties. The Kids Klub staff for helped to coordinate the daily change-over of the facility from their program to ours.

Additionally, the volunteer coaches and team representatives were essential to the success of this season. Parks staff had no difficulty filling the 90-team league with coaches.

## Sealcoating City Streets

Through the passage of time, and normal wear, a new street will deteriorate to the point of total failure in about 25 years. To extend the life of a street the Public Works Department - Streets Maintenance Division performs several types of preventative maintenance activities. One of these activities is to apply a layer of sealcoat that will extend the life of a street by five to seven years. The sealcoat process begins with the street being prepared and swept, next a layer of emulsion is applied followed by a layer of rock, which is set using a roller. Finally, the street is swept to remove any excess rock. The cost of this sealcoat process is about \$1.50 per



square yard. When compared to the alternative, street overlay at a cost of about \$6.00 per square yard, this is the most cost effective method of prolonging the life of our streets.

The Public Works Streets Division annually identifies streets that are in need of a sealcoat layer. In FY 2003 streets in the Holleman Village, Woodland Estates,

College Hills, and Southwood Valley subdivisions were identified as needing sealcoat. In addition, sections of major and minor collectors were identified. These sections are on Southwest Parkway, Holleman, Welsh, Pebble Creek Parkway, and Woodcreek Drive. The streets identified for sealcoat in FY 2003 should be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

## City of College Station



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## Shining Moments

- **Ms. Donnalee Dox wrote the City Manager to thank College Station Utilities for their hard work in correcting some potentially dangerous issues on her property. She also commended Len Jenicek, John Comstock, and Ryan Busa for prompt and professional service.**
- **A citizen called to express his gratitude for Animal Control Officer Kathy Pipes' assistance recovering his dog. The dog had fallen from a 10 foot drop. Pipes coordinated with College Station Utilities to recover the animal.**

## *Planet Earth Celebration 2003 is a Huge Success*

The annual Planet Earth Celebration was held at the Wolf Pen Creek Amphitheatre on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003. This is the eighth year that College Station has cooperated with the City of Bryan and Texas A&M University to bring a community-wide environmental education festival to Bryan-College Station residents. This year's event also featured Arbor Day ceremonies sponsored by Keep

Brazos Beautiful. The event was a huge success, drawing over 1,000 people who all had a great time learning how to take better care of the Earth!



## **College Station Utilities Receives Recognition for Outstanding Performance from TCEQ**

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ, formerly the TNRCC) recognized College Station Utilities recently for outstanding compliance with the Total Coliform Monitoring Rule. Coliform bacteria are monitored by public water systems as a means of detecting microbial contamination of drinking water. College Station Utilities collects 81 drinking water

samples each month to be tested by the Brazos County Health Department for the presence of Coliform bacteria.

In a letter to College Station Utilities, the TCEQ stated that College Station Utilities was "...recognized for an outstanding level of compliance in monthly monitoring related to the Total Coliform Rule." College Station Utili-

ties was recognized for having no violations of the Total Coliform Rule for the five-year period, 1997 – 2001. College Station was previously recognized for outstanding compliance for the five-year period from 1992 – 1996.